

DOCKET NO: 277409US6PCT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF

:

HERVE THELLIER, ET AL.

: EXAMINER: SZEWCZYK, C.

SERIAL NO: 10/550,736

:

FILED: SEPTEMBER 26, 2005

: GROUP ART UNIT: 1741

FOR: METHOD FOR CROWNING
SHEETS OF GLASS BY PRESSING AND
SUCTION

:

REPLY BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 41.41

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22313
SIR:

In response to the Examiner's answer dated June 9, 2011, Appellants make the following reply:

Claims 13 and 23 include the steps of placing a central region of superposed glass sheets into contact with a male former "surrounded by a passage between the male former and a surrounding skirt," pressing a peripheral region of the superposed glass sheets between the male former and the female former wherein "the glass sheets are continuously supported by the female former prior to the pressing step and until at least after the commencement of the pressing step," and after discontinuing the pressing step, the superposed glass sheets remain "in contact with the male former under an effect of a partial vacuum at least partly applied through the passage between the male former and the skirt surrounding the male former."

According to the final rejection and the Examiner's Answer, it would have been obvious, in view of the flange 17 of Kuster, to have used such a flange as a surrounding skirt

in the former of Herrington “to achieve the advantages disclosed by Kuster.” The “advantages disclosed by Kuster” are:

It is advantageous for the casing 13 to be provided, at its lower edge, with a surrounding flange 17 which reduces the gap between the casing 13 and the monolithic convex bending block 11. This also reduces the gap between the glass sheets 2' and the casing 13. It is advantageous to reduce this gap to a minimum since this decreases the flow of air *required*, without reducing the rate of flow at the edge of the glass sheets and therefore *without reducing the lifting effect of the partial vacuum*. In this way, it is possible, to obtain the desired partial vacuum and consequently the force required to correct the bending of the glass sheets, and to use smaller and less expensive vacuum generators. (Col. 4, lines 23-35; emphasis added).

Appellants had pointed out in the Appeal Brief that the flange 17 of Kuster is provided to reduce the air flow rate “without reducing the lifting effect of the partial vacuum,” and so its purported advantage is only relevant where the glass sheet is to be lifted from the lower bending ring. On the other hand, the claims recite “the glass sheets are continuously supported by the female former prior to the pressing step and until at least after the commencement of the pressing step,” and the final rejection had deemed that Herrington discloses pressing a glass sheet that is still supported by the female former, i.e., it is **not** “lifted from the lower bending ring.” Thus, the purported advantage of the flange 17 in Kuster would not apply to Herrington and so a flange would not have been obvious therein.

In response, the Examiner’s Answer has argued (pp. 8-9) that Kuster teaches a further advantage for the flange 17: to decrease air flow and permit use of a smaller vacuum generator, whereby the flange 17 would have been obvious in Herrington even though the glass sheet is not to be lifted from the lower bending ring.

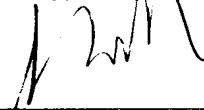
However, this supposed further advantage of the flange 17 of Kuster also depends on the glass sheet being lifted from the bending ring 3. That is, the flange 17 of Kuster “is advantageous to reduce this gap to a minimum since this decreases the flow of air *required*” [**to lift the glass sheet from the bending ring 3]**. If the glass sheet is not to be lifted from

the bending ring 3, as the examiner has asserted is the case in Herrington, no air flow is “required,” and there would be no use for a flange to permit a smaller vacuum generator without reducing the lifting effect. Thus, irrespective of the advantage for the flange 17 described in Kuster, it would not apply to Herrington as interpreted in the final rejection.

Appellants therefore request that the final rejection be REVERSED.

Respectfully submitted,

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